

MEMORANDUM FOR CORRESPONDENTS

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Secretary of Defense William Perry will leave Washington, DC, on Tuesday, September 27, to visit Spain, France, Germany, and Italy. He will return to Washington, DC, on Tuesday, October 4.

The purpose of his visit to Spain is to meet with government officials and to attend NATO ministerial meetings. In France, Secretary Perry will meet with Minister of Defense Leotard. In Germany, Secretary Perry will visit the Marshall Center in Garmisch as well as units of the U.S. European Command which is headquartered in Stuttgart. In Italy, he will visit U.S. units and ships providing support to Operation Provide Promise and NATO's Operation Sharp Guard.

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NEWS BRIEFING

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Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense
(Public Affairs)

**DoD Background Briefing
Secretary Perry to Europe
Attributable To: Senior Defense Official
Friday, September 23, 1994**

Briefer: The lead event on this trip is Secretary Perry's attendance at the Seville informal Defense Ministers meeting. This is the second in a new type of meeting for NATO Defense Ministers. The first was in Travemuende last year where Secretary Aspin launched the Partnership for Peace. Less than a year ago. The idea was to provide some opportunity for these Ministers to get away--to break away from the standard agenda of NATO defense ministerials where they have to receive reports from various committees and all of that--and to create their own agenda and talk about issues that might be appropriate for this informal format. More appropriate for this format.

The most important aspect of this meeting is French participation. French Minister of Defense Francois Leotard will be in attendance, and I think this is the first NATO meeting since 1967 attended by a French MOD.

As you know, the French are not part of the integrated military structure and, as a matter of policy, have not participated in these meetings--in the defense meetings. We had hoped that they would come to the Travemuende meeting. The French government made a decision not to. But we take this as a very hopeful sign that the French are willing to engage in this kind of dialogue.

The agenda in Seville is one that will be familiar to those of you following NATO issues. Certainly, Bosnia will be the number one issue of discussion. The idea of combined joint task forces, also announced at the January NATO Summit, will be discussed. I have in front of me the other specific topics. I'm sure I'll leave something out here.

But one important topic in the spirit of these new off-line issues is Mediterranean security. It's quite appropriate a topic for a meeting in Seville. Many of the Mediterranean littoral states, members of NATO, have felt for some time that NATO's emphasis on opening up to the East needs to be supported by a look to the South. The real security threat that many of them perceive is from the South. And in an alliance that takes security threats to all of its members seriously, they want to make sure that we understand their concerns about the Mediterranean -- about Islamic fundamentalism, events in Algeria--that could spread through the Maghreb and perhaps even beyond. So that will be an important topic of conversation.

Secretary Perry will lead a discussion on Partnership for the Peace and the way ahead on that. Volker Rue, the German Minister of Defense, will lead a discussion on NATO expansion. So these are really two--Partnership for Peace and NATO expansion--related topics, and I think the first afternoon that will be the subject of discussion.

The Secretary will be meeting with his colleagues from France, Germany, and the United Kingdom in a MOD-quad the beginning of this -- such a good name. We had to have this meeting; and that meeting will be before the beginning of the formal Seville discussions.

Q: What day is that?

A: Thursday morning.

Q: [inaudible]

A: The 29th and 30th.

The Secretary has a new colleague, a new government in the Netherlands that has appointed a new Minister of Defense. He'll be meeting with him. There will be opportunities for other informal off-line bilateral meetings with other Ministers during the two days.

So that's the big event, the Seville defense ministerial. Before we go to Seville, we will be in Madrid where the Secretary will have a meeting with his Spanish counterpart, Minister of Defense Vargas. He'll also meet the Prime Minister, Felipe Gonzalez. They'll have a working lunch, and then will go to Seville Wednesday.

So we'll leave here Tuesday night for Madrid, have meetings in Madrid, and Wednesday afternoon, go to Seville for meetings there Thursday and Friday.

Q: Isn't one of the main reasons that Leotard is going there is because France is deeply embedded in Bosnia and worried about it? Wouldn't that be one major reason why France is showing up at this meeting?

A: He has made no secret of his interest in participating in these meetings. He had hoped that he could come to Travemuende last year, so the decision was made... I asked the Secretary how was the decision, we're delighted that you're coming to Seville. How was that decision made? He pointed to the highest levels of his government. So I can't speculate on why they decided to allow him to go, but all we can do is welcome his participation. It certainly provides another opportunity to continue discussion on Bosnia, but there's a whole range of issues here. As I said, we take this as a signal that France is willing to consider closer--if still ad hoc--association with NATO on military issues, and that's all to the good.

Q: [inaudible]

A: I don't know. Leotard said the government made this decision at the highest level. It's an interesting question, what is the highest level? I won't speculate on what that means.

Let me run through the rest of this trip quickly.

On Friday, after this Seville, Sevillemuende as the Germans are calling it, ends, the Secretary will go with the French Minister of Defense, Leotard, for a bilateral meeting, and Leotard has invited the Secretary to come to his home town of Frejus. It's on the Riviera. But it's a working--hard working--meeting.

We will have a formal plenary meeting with Leotard that evening in Frejus.

Q: [inaudible]

A: He's coming on the government plane.

The French Minister of Defense is being inducted into La Confrerie des Chevaliers du Tastevin. The Brotherhood of the Knights of Wine Tasting. This is a club open to men and women of all nationalities and races, and it has been arranged that the Secretary will also be inducted into the society. So they will fly up to Dijon on Saturday. This will be on Minister Leotard's aircraft while the hardworking staff remains behind. They will stay Saturday in Dijon.

Q: Where do they stay?

A: Chapeau Rouge.

Sunday, the Secretary will go to the Marshall Center in Garmisch, Germany, where he will give a short speech and have a reception and dinner with the students of this first class of the Marshall Center. There are 80 students there from Central European state and states of the former Soviet Union, mostly lieutenant colonel and colonel rank, but some civilians, in this one-year program to learn Western style management of Defense Ministers. It's a very interesting group of students. I can say that with some experience. I lectured to this group a few weeks

ago. It's a very good group. They ask good questions. He'll get some tough questions from these folks.

Q: Is that open for coverage?

A: I don't see why not. There are about 80 of them there, so his intention is to make a few opening remarks but mostly to answer questions that they have.

Monday we are going to look at.... Basically Monday and Tuesday we have given to our European Command. The Secretary wants to see first-hand military operations. We will go down into the Adriatic on Monday. A visit to a ship, I think this is still being, the specifics of this day are still being worked out, but we will probably visit Brindisi. We will go out to a ship in the Adriatic, and generally observe military operations--naval operations--down there.

That evening we will go back to Germany, to Stuttgart... This is Monday evening. Back to Stuttgart--Stuttgart is the Headquarters of European Command. The Secretary will meet the military officers who have been involved in Operation Support Hope in Rwanda. My understanding is that Madame Ogata of UNHCR will also be at that meeting. He will have dinner that night with his four-star commanders in Europe. General Joulwan, General Boyd, Admiral Leighton Smith from NAVSOUTH, General Jamerson, the Air Force Commander, General Maddox, the Army commander.

Tuesday, we will visit Spangdahlem Air Force Base which is the home of the Air Force composite wing in Europe, and he will make a special point of talking to some of the airmen and women who are associated with the airlift into Goma.

We will go from there to Grafenwoehr, the Army training center in Europe. The Secretary has never been there. This is a spectacular training facility, and he will take a tour there and see the kinds of operations and simulations that are done at that installation. We'll go from there to the airport and come back home, arriving home late that night, Tuesday.

So a big NATO defense ministerial--informal--in Seville; two bilateral meetings with NATO ministerial colleagues--Spain and France; and two days with the U.S. military in Europe, for hands-on experience with his military forces over there. That's the trip.

Q: Can you elaborate a bit on Mediterranean security? What kinds of changes you wanted? What's the general feel about what should happen?

A: The French, especially, but to some extent also the Spanish, Portuguese, and Italians are very concerned about the Maghreb, and especially about it. For the French, Algeria is the number one security concern at the moment. Their concern is that this low level of terrorism by Islamic fundamentalism may topple that government. That poses an immediate security

risk for French citizens, French passport holders in Algeria--there are some thousands of those. The prospect of uncontrolled and massive migration of people, whether with French passports or not, fleeing this turmoil and coming into France... I have heard speculation that maybe hundreds of thousands of people. So when we were concerned about the Cuban migrants in the Caribbean, the French noted the parallel with Algeria; and of course, given the relative population, that poses a potentially much more serious problem for them than Cuban migration would have for us.

Beyond that immediate concern is the more general one that Islamic fundamentalism could spread from Algeria to other states, and then across the Mediterranean into those northern liberal states that have very large Muslim populations themselves. So this could transmute into a threat to internal security and stability.

I don't think, and this is something to be discussed at NATO, I don't think this is any issue that NATO as an alliance can take military action to forestall. They simply want to put this on the agenda, make sure that however NATO can assist in monitoring the situation--for example, by sharing of intelligence--that it does so. But I think the important point here is to reassure our southern flank friends that the... I shouldn't call it the southern flank. The southern members of NATO--that all of this attention we have given to NATO's east over the past year since the announcement of Partnership for Peace--has not excluded our concern for their problems, which are in the Mediterranean.

Q: What ever happened to moving the F-16s to Italy from Madrid? Are they going ahead with that base?

A: Yes, it's a done deal. I don't think the flag has formally moved yet. We can find out.

A2: ...to Aviano? Yes, it has.

Q: Not to Aviano. The F-16s out of Madrid. They're going to establish a base in Italy. There was a lot of controversy over it. What ever happened to that?

A: The 16th Air Force, which was the headquarters in Torrejon, has been reestablished in Aviano. There will be two squadrons permanently there, and that is the linear successor of that wing, 401st Tac [Tactical] Fighter Wing in Torrejon.

What we've been looking for ever since the Spanish told us that our presence was no longer welcome in Torrejon, was looking for a place in the southern region where we could maintain an air presence.

Q: There was another air wing going to be moved.

A: Crotone down in southern....

Q: Can you bring us up to date on what the current U.S. policy is about the possible unilateral lifting of the arms embargo, and to what extent at these meetings the United States will be trying to either pressure the allies to go along or [inaudible] the essence of supporting the United Nations? Where are we with that policy? And if there's still a chance that come November 15th or whoever, that for whatever reason, the U.S. would not proceed in a unilateral lifting of the arms embargo?

A: You know the timetable here. Do I need to go over this October...

Q: [inaudible]

A: The President sent a letter to the Senate that said if the Bosnian-Serbs do not accept the Contact Group plan by October 15th, he will go to the UN Security Council within two weeks with a draft resolution supporting multilateral lift. If within a reasonable period of time thereafter that has not been voted out favorably, the President will consult with Congress on next steps that include the possibility of unilateral lift. So there is one specific fixed date here, and that is that October 15th is the deadline for the Bosnia-Serbs to accept. And two weeks from that date, for the President to submit a draft resolution to the Security Council. After that there is no drop dead date. Within a reasonable period of time, the President has said he will discuss with Congress next steps. Those next steps might include unilateral lift. So there is no timetable, no deadline or date certain by which we will move unilaterally to lift the arms embargo. That certainly remains an option, and we understand the support within the Congress for a move in that direction, and that's one of the possibilities we are actively studying right now, but it is not predetermined that we will move to that, and it is not predetermined that we will do that on any certain day.

Q: What's the feeling of the allies, especially [inaudible] going into the meeting about the U.S. course of action?

A: Generally negative about lifting the arms embargo. Some countries viscerally are opposed to this; others less so. But it's fair to say that generally the attitude on this is that this is not a good idea, and that they are not inclined to support multilateral lifting of the arms embargo.

Q: Any of the less viscerally opposed, has their position changed in the course of the last few weeks because of events on the ground there? In other words, has their resistance to it softened?

A: I can't answer that. I'm sure that will be a discussion that the Secretary will have, especially with his British and French colleagues, and also with other countries that have troops in UNPROFOR. The concern of all of the countries with troops on the ground, and indeed it's a concern we share, is the security of those troops. And NATO and UNPROFOR have been working on plans for extrication. They have told us that if we move to unilateral lift, the British especially, if the United States moves unilaterally to lift the arms embargo, they want their troops out. They expect our support if those troops get into trouble.

Q: Is there any consideration to the position outlined by some in not specifically lifting unilaterally the arms embargo, but simply no longer participating in the enforcement of the embargo? Still sort of abiding by it, but not having U.S. ships or whatever out intercepting? Is that a serious option? Is that an option under consideration? Or is that just something I heard floating around?

A: There are all sorts of ideas in the ether up there. I should add that the Nunn/Mitchell amendment mandates the United States not to participate in enforcement of the embargo after November 15th. That is binding legislation, and we are now working with our lawyers to see exactly what that will mean. But it is now the law of the United States that after November 15th, our forces will not be participants in enforcing the arms embargo.

Q: So there is another drop dead date?

Q: Isn't the argument here that if you lift the embargo, if the allies take their troops out, then the number one mission of the United States is supposed to be providing humanitarian aid? You're obviously not going to be able to do that. They're heading into another winter. They've already had their first snowfall over in Sarajevo. Isn't this a prescription now for another disastrous winter just when it looked like there might be some prospect of peace?

A: Yes.

Q: [inaudible]

A: We would like UNPROFOR to stay in Bosnia. Certainly this is not a time as winter is setting in to think about a withdrawal. That would have serious adverse consequences for the delivery of humanitarian assistance. We have encouraged our allies to try to keep their forces in UNPROFOR, to keep UNPROFOR intact, certainly through the winter.

Q: Is the U.S. actually prepared to offer anything specific [inaudible]? Are we offering secure intelligence, or do we have any other specifics to offer in that area?

A: We have intelligence sharing arrangements with our NATO allies already, and we are going to listen to the French and Spanish and others. And if there are ways that we can be helpful and supportive on this, we will.

Q: [inaudible]

A: On this issue we will be in the receive mode.

Q: [inaudible] some kind of [inaudible]?

A: There has been no formal request other than that we put on the agenda of this meeting the whole question of Mediterranean security, and we were very happy to do that.

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For those of you who are traveling with us, we will be available after this meeting to give you some sense of where the discussion is going on this question of Mediterranean security.

Q: You can brief us Wednesday after the...

A: Thursday.

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